

Chapter XX

Vidya Gita

1-20. "I shall now relate to you an ancient sacred story. On one occasion very long ago there was a very distinguished gathering of holy saints collected in the abode of Brahmâ, the Creator, when a very subtle and sublime disputation took place. Among those present were Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara and Sanatsujata, Vasistha, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu, Brighu, Atri, Angiras, Pracheta, Narada, Chyavana, Vamadeva, Visvamitra, Gautama, Suka, Parasara, Vyasa, Kanva, Kasyapa, Daksha, Sumanta, Sanka, Likhita, Devala and other celestial and royal sages. Each one of them spoke of his own system with courage and conviction and maintained that it was better than all the rest. But they could reach no conclusion and so asked Brahmâ: 'Lord! We are sages who know all about the world and beyond, but each one's way of life differs from that of the others because the dispositions of our minds differ. Some of us are always in *nirvikalpa samâdhi*, some engaged in philosophical discussions, some sunk in devotion, some have taken to work, and others seem exactly like men of the world. Which is the best among us? Please tell us. We cannot decide ourselves because each thinks that his way is the best.'

"Thus requested, Brahmâ seeing their perplexity answered: 'Best of saints! I also would like to know. There is Parameswara who is the All-knower. Let us go and ask him.' Collecting Vishnu on their way, they went to Siva. There the leader of the deputation, Brahmâ, asked Siva about the matter. Having heard Brahmâ, Siva divined the mind of Brahmâ and understood that the *rishis* were wanting in confidence and so that any words of his would be useless. He then said to them, 'Hear me, *Rishis*! Neither do I clearly see which is the method. Let us meditate on the Goddess—Her Majesty Unconditioned Knowledge—we shall then be able to understand even the subtlest of truths by

Her Grace.’ On hearing these words of Siva, all of them, including Siva, Vishnu and Brahmâ, meditated on Her Divine Majesty, the Transcendental Consciousness pervading the three states of life (waking, dream and sleep). Thus invoked, She manifested in Her glory as the Transcendental Voice in the expanse of pure consciousness.

“They heard the Voice speak like thunder from the skies, ‘Speak out your minds, O *Rishis*! Be quick, the desires of my devotees will always be fulfilled immediately.’

21-28. “Hearing the Voice, the exalted *rishis* prostrated and Brahmâ and the others praised the Goddess—namely Absolute Consciousness pervading the three states of life.

“Salutations to Thee! the Greatest! the Best! the Most Auspicious! the Absolute Knowledge! the Consciousness of the three states! the Creatrix! the Protectress! the Dissolver in the Self! the Supreme One transcending all! Salutations again!

“There was no time when Thou wert not, because Thou art unborn! Thou art ever fresh and hence Thou never growest old. Thou art all; the essence of all, the knower of all, the delighter of all. Thou art not all. Thou art nowhere, with no core in Thee, unaware of anything, and delighting no one.

“O Supreme Being! Salutations to Thee, over and over again, before and behind, above and below, on all sides and everywhere.

“Kindly tell us of Thy relative form and Thy transcendental state, Thy prowess, and Thy identity with *jnana*. What is the proper and perfect means for attaining Thee, the nature and the result of such attainment? What is the utmost finality of accomplishment, beyond which there remains nothing to be accomplished? Who is the best among the accomplished sages? Salutations again to Thee!

29. “Thus besought, the Goddess of ultimate knowledge began with great kindness to explain it clearly to the sages:

30. “Listen, sages! I shall categorically explain to you all that you ask. I shall give you the nectar drawn out as the essence from the unending accumulation of sacred literature.

31-40. “I am the abstract intelligence wherefrom the cosmos originates, whereon it flourishes, and wherein it resolves, like

the images in a mirror. The ignorant know me as the gross universe, whereas the wise feel me as their own pure being eternally glowing as 'I-I' within. This realization is possible only in the deep stillness of thought-free consciousness similar to that of the deep sea free from waves. The most earnest of devotees worship me spontaneously and with the greatest sincerity which is due to their love of me. Although they know that I am their own non-dual Self, yet the habit of loving devotion which is deep-rooted in them makes them conceive their own Self as ME and worship ME as the life-current pervading their bodies, senses and mind without which nothing could exist and which forms the sole purport of the holy scriptures. Such is my Transcendental State.

"My concrete form is the eternal couple—the Supreme Lord and Energy—always in undivided union and abiding as the eternal consciousness pervading the three phenomenal states of waking, dream and sleep, and reclining on the cot whose four legs are Brahmâ (the Creator), Vishnu (the Protector), Siva (the Destroyer) and Isvara (Disappearance) and whose surface is Sadasiva (Grace) which is contained in the mansion known as 'fulfilment of purpose' enclosed by the garden of 'Kadamba' trees in the jewel island situated in the wide ocean of nectar surrounding the cosmos and extending beyond.

'Brahmâ, Vishnu, Siva, Isvara, Sadasiva, Ganesa, Skanda, the gods of the eight quarters, their energies of her gods, celestials, serpents and other superhuman beings all manifestations of myself. However, people do not know ME because their intellect is shrouded in ignorance.

41. "I grant boons to those who worship ME. There is no one besides ME worthy of worship or capable of fulfilling all desires.

Commentary: All deities who receive worship and all conceptions of God are My manifestations, because I am pure intelligence which cannot under any circumstances be transcended.

42. "The fruits of worship are put forth by Me according to the mode of worship and the nature of individual desires. I am indivisible and interminable.

43. “Being non-dual and abstract intelligence I spontaneously manifest even as the smallest detail *in* the universe and *as* the universe.

44. “Though I manifest in diverse ways, I still remain unblemished because absoluteness is My being. This is My chief power, which is somewhat hard to fully understand.

45. “Therefore, O *Rishis*! consider this with the keenest of intellect. Though I am the abode of all and immanent in all I remain pure.

46-49. “Although I am not involved in any manner and am always free, I wield My power—called *Mâyâ*; become covered with ignorance, appear full of desires, seek their fulfilment, grow restless, project favorable and unfavorable environments, am born and reborn as individuals, until growing wiser I seek a teacher and sage, learn the truth from him, put it in practice and finally become absolved. All this goes on in My pure, uncontaminated, ever free absolute intelligence. This manifestation of the ignorant and the free, and of others, is called My creation which is however, without any accessories—My power is too vast to be described. I shall tell you something of it in brief. It is that the cosmos is only the obverse of the many details in them leading up to different results.

50. “Knowledge relating to me is complex but it can be dealt with under the two categories, dual and non-dual, of which the former relates to worship and the latter to realization. On account of their intricacies, there are many details in them leading up to different results.

51. “Dual knowledge is manifold because it depends on the concept of duality and manifests as worship, prayer, incantation, meditation, etc., all of which are due to nothing more than mental imagery.

52-53. “Even so, they are efficacious in contradistinction to daydreams, for the law of nature provides for it. There are degrees in the efficacy of the methods, of which the most important concerns the aspect mentioned before (Note: see above the concrete form of Devi). The ultimate goal of all is certainly non-dual realization.

Commentary: Mental imagery cannot put forth tangible results either directly or in successive stages. But the one relating to God differs from ordinary daydreams in that it purifies and strengthens the mind in order to make it fit to realize the Self. Again the most efficacious among the concepts of God is the one already mentioned, namely, the eternal couple. Although it will not directly remove ignorance yet it will help its removal for the resurrection of the man as a full blown *jnani*.

54. "Worship of Abstract Intelligence in a concrete form is not only useful but essential for non-dual realization. For how can one be made fit for it, without Her benediction?

55. "Non-dual realization is the same as pure Intelligence, absolutely void of objective knowledge. Such realization nullifies all objective knowledge, revealing it in all its nakedness to be as harmless as a picture of a pouncing tiger or of an enraged serpent.

56. "When the mind has completely resolved into the Self, that state is called *nirvikalpa samâdhi* (the undifferentiated peaceful state). After waking up from it, the person is overpowered by the memory of his experience as the one, undivided, infinite, pure Self and he knows 'I am That' as opposed to the puerile I-thought of the ignorant. That is Supreme Knowledge (*vijnana* or *pratyabhijna jnana*).

Note: The advanced state of meditation is *savikalpa samâdhi*, where the person is aware that he has turned away from objectivity towards subjectivity and feels his proximity to the state of Self-Realization. When he actually sinks within the Self, there is no knowledge apart from the simple awareness of blissful existence. This is *nirvikalpa samâdhi*. Waking up, he sees the world just as any other man does but his outlook has become different. He is now able to know his pure Self and no longer confounds himself with the ego. That is the acme of Realization.

57. "Theoretical knowledge consists in differentiating between the Self and the non-Self through a study of the Scriptures, or the teachings of a Master, or by one's own deliberation.

58-62. "Supreme wisdom is that which puts an end to the sense of non-Self once and for all. Non-dual realization admits

nothing unknown or unknowable and pervades everything in entirety so that it cannot in any way be transcended (e.g., a mirror and the images). When that is accomplished, the intellect becomes quite clear because all doubts have been destroyed; (doubts are usually with regard to creation, the identity of the Self and their mutual relationship) and then the predispositions of the mind (e.g., lust, greed, anger, etc.) are destroyed, though any remnants of these that may remain are as harmless as a fangless viper.

63. "The fruit of Self-Realization is the end of all misery here and hereafter and absolute fearlessness. That is called Emancipation.

Note: There is an end of misery in sleep; but the potentiality of misery is not ended. Realization destroys the cause of misery and sets the man free for ever.

64-65. "Fear implies the existence of something, apart from oneself. Can the sense of duality persist after non-dual Realization, or can there be darkness after sun-rise?

"O *Rishis*! There will be no fear in the absence of duality. On the other hand, fear will not cease so long as there is the sense of duality.

66. "What is perceived in the world as being apart from the Self is also clearly seen to be perishable. What is perishable must certainly involve fear of loss.

67. "Union implies separation; so also acquisition implies loss.

68-70. "If emancipation be external to the Self, it implies fear of loss, and is therefore not worth aspiring to. On the other hand, *moksha* is fearlessness and not external to the Self.

"When the knower, knowledge and the known merge into unity that state is totally free from fear and hence *moksha* results.

"*Jnana* (Supreme Wisdom) is the state devoid of thoughts, will and desire, and is unimpeded by ignorance.

71. "It is certainly the primal state of the knower, but remains unrecognised for want of acquaintance with it. The *Guru* and *sastras* alone can make the individual acquainted with the Self.

72-77. "The Self is abstract intelligence free from thought. The knower, knowledge and the known are not real as different entities. When differentiation among them is destroyed, their true nature is evident in the resulting non-dual consciousness, which is also the state of emancipation.

"There is in fact no differentiation among the knower, etc. The differences are simply conventions retained for the smooth working of earthly life. Emancipation is eternal and, therefore, here and now, it is nothing to be acquired. The Self manifests as the knower, knowledge and the known; the cycle of births and deaths endures with all the apparent reality of a mountain so long as this manifestation lasts. As soon as the manifestation is realized to consist of the Self alone without any admixture of non-self, the cycle of births and deaths comes to a standstill, and is broken down to fragments like clouds dispersed by strong winds.

78. "Thus you find that earnestness is the only requisite for emancipation. No other requisite is needed if the longing for emancipation is intense and unwavering.

79. "What is the use of hundreds of efforts in the absence of a real and unswerving desire for emancipation? That is the sole requisite and nothing else.

80-81. "Intense devotion signifies mental abstraction as the devotee loses himself in the desired object. In this particular instance, it will mean emancipation itself. For such unwavering devotion must certainly succeed and success is only a question of time—which may be days, months, years, or even the next birth, according as the predispositions are light or dense.

82-83. "The intellect is ordinarily befouled by evil propensities and so nothing good flourishes there. Consequently, the people are boiled in the seething cauldron of births and deaths. Of these evil propensities, the first is want of faith in the revelations made by the *Guru* and in the *sastras*; the second is addiction to desires; and the third is dullness (*i.e.*, inability to understand the revealed truth). This is a brief statement of them.

84-85. "Of these, want of faith is betrayed by one's doubts regarding the truth of the statements and by failure to under-

stand them. The doubt arises whether there is *moksha*; and later misunderstanding leads to its denial. These two are sure obstacles to any sincere efforts being made for realization.

86. "All obstacles are set at nought by a determined belief in the contrary; that is to say—determined belief regarding the existence of *moksha* will destroy both uncertainty and misunderstanding.

"But the question arises how this determined belief will be possible when faith is wanting. Therefore cut at its root. What is its root?

87-88. "Want of faith has its root in unfavorable logic. Give it up and take to approved logic as found in holy books and expounded by a *Guru*. Then enlightenment becomes possible and faith results. Thus ends the first evil propensity.

89-95. "The second propensity, namely desire, prevents the intellect from following the right pursuit. For, the mind engrossed in desire, cannot engage in a spiritual pursuit. The abstraction of a lover is well known to all; he can hear or see nothing in front of him. Anything said in his hearing is as good as not said. Desire must therefore be first overcome before aspiring for spiritual attainment. That can be done only by dispassion. The propensity is manifold, being the forms of love, anger, greed, pride, jealousy, etc. The worst of them is pursuit of pleasure which, if destroyed destroys all else. Pleasure may be subtle or gross. Neither of these must be indulged in, even in thought. As soon as the thought of pleasure arises, it must be dismissed by the will-power developed by dispassion.

96-99. "In this way, the second evil propensity is overcome. The third, known as dullness resulting from innumerable wicked actions in preceding births, is the worst of the series and hardest to overcome by one's own efforts. Concentration of mind and understanding of truth are not possible when dullness prevails.

"There is no remedy for it other than worship of the Goddess of the Self (adoration, prayer, meditation, etc.). I remove the devotee's dullness according to his worship, quickly, or gradually, or in the succeeding birth.

100-102. "He who unreservedly surrenders himself to Me with devotion, is endowed with all the requisites necessary for Self-Realization. He who worships Me, easily overcomes all obstacles to Self-Realization. On the other hand, he, who being stuck up, does not take refuge in Me—the pure intelligence manipulating the person—is repeatedly upset by difficulties so that his success is very doubtful.

103-104. "Therefore, O *Rishis*! the chief requisite is one-pointed devotion to God. The devotee is the best of aspirants. The one devoted to abstract consciousness excels every other seeker. Consummation lies in the discernment of the Self as distinguished from the non-Self.

105-112. "The Self is at present confounded with the body, etc., such confusion must cease and awareness of the Self must result as opposed to nescience in sleep.

"The Self is experienced even now; but it is not discerned rightly, for it is identified with the body, etc., there is therefore endless suffering. The Self is not hidden indeed; it is always gleaming out as 'I,' but this 'I,' is mistaken for the body, owing to ignorance. On this ignorance ceasing, the 'I' is ascertained to be the true consciousness alone; and that sets all doubts at rest. This and nothing else has been ascertained by the sages to be finality. Thaumaturgic powers such as flying in space, etc., are all fragmentary and not worth a particle of Self-Realization. For this is the unbroken and immortal bliss of the Self in which all else is included.

"Thaumaturgic powers are also hindrance to Self-Realization. Of what use are they? They are but simple acrobatic tricks. The Creator's status appears to a Self-Realized man to be only a trifle. What use are these powers, unless for wasting one's time?

113. "There is no accomplishment equal to Self-Realization which is alone capable of ending all misery because it is the state of eternal Bliss.

114. "Self-Realization differs from all accomplishments in that the fear of death is destroyed once for all.

115. "Realization differs according to the antecedent practice and, commensurate with the degree of purity of mind, may be perfect, middling or dull.

Note: Realization of the Self and eternal inherence as unbroken 'I-I' in all surroundings are the practices and the fruit.

116-119. "You have seen great *pandits* well versed in the Vedas and capable of chanting them quite correctly amidst any amount of distractions. They are the best. Those who are capable businessmen, repeat the Vedas quite correctly when they engage in chanting them without other distractions. These are the middle class.

"Whereas others are constantly chanting them and do it well. Such are of the lowest order among *pandits*. Similarly there are distinctions among the sages also.

120-121. "Some sages abide as the Self even while engaged in complex duties, such as ruling a kingdom (*e.g.*, King Janaka); others can do so in intervals of work; still others can do so by constant practice alone. They are respectively of the highest, the middle and the lowest order. Of these, the highest order represents the utmost limit of realization.

122. "Unbroken supreme awareness even in dream is the mark of the highest order.

123. "The Person who is not involuntarily made the tool of his mental predispositions but who invokes them at his will, is of the highest order.

124. "He who abides in the Self as 'I-I,' as spontaneously and continuously as the ignorant man does in the body, is again of the highest order.

125. "He who, though engaged in work, does not look upon anything as non-self, is a perfect sage.

126. "He who even while doing his work remains as in a sleep is a perfect sage.

127. "Thus the best among the sages are never out of *samâdhi*, be they working or idle.

128-133. "He who is from his own experience capable of appreciating the states of other *jnanis* including the best among them, is certainly a perfect sage. He who is not influenced by

happiness or misery, by pleasure or pain, by desires, doubts or fear, is a perfect sage. He who realizes pleasure, pain and every other phenomenon to be in and of the Self, is a perfect sage. He who feels himself pervading all—be they ignorant or emancipated—is a perfect sage. He who knowing the trammels of bondage, does not seek release from them and remains in peace, is a perfect sage.

“The perfect among the sages is identical with Me. There is absolutely no difference between us.

134. “I have now told you all these in answer to your questions. You need no longer be perplexed with doubts.

135. “Having said so, Transcendental Intelligence became silent.

“Then all the *Rishis* saluted Siva and the other Gods and returned to their own abodes.

“I have now told you the sacred *Gita* of pure knowledge, which destroys all sins and purifies the mind. This *Gita* is the best among *Gitas* because it has proceeded from Abstract Intelligence Herself and it leads one to emancipation on being attentively heard and cogitated upon.

“This *Gita* is the raft to save one from sinking in the ocean of *samsara* (cycle of births and deaths), and so it must be read or repeated every day with love and care.”

Thus ends the chapter of *Vidya Gita* in *Tripura Rahasya*.